



## Triggered by Defeat or Victory? Assessing the Impact of Presidential Election Results on Extreme Right-Wing Mobilization Online

Ryan Scrivens , George W. Burruss , Thomas J. Holt , Steven M. Chermak , Joshua D. Freilich & Richard Frank

To cite this article: Ryan Scrivens , George W. Burruss , Thomas J. Holt , Steven M. Chermak , Joshua D. Freilich & Richard Frank (2020): Triggered by Defeat or Victory? Assessing the Impact of Presidential Election Results on Extreme Right-Wing Mobilization Online, Deviant Behavior, DOI: [10.1080/01639625.2020.1807298](https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2020.1807298)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2020.1807298>



Published online: 12 Aug 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



# Triggered by Defeat or Victory? Assessing the Impact of Presidential Election Results on Extreme Right-Wing Mobilization Online

Ryan Scrivens<sup>a</sup>, George W. Burruss<sup>b</sup>, Thomas J. Holt<sup>a</sup>, Steven M. Chermak<sup>a</sup>,  
Joshua D. Freilich<sup>c</sup>, and Richard Frank<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA; <sup>b</sup>University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, USA; <sup>c</sup>John Jay College, City University of New York, New York, New York, USA; <sup>d</sup>Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada

## ABSTRACT

The theoretical literature from criminology, social movements, and political sociology, among others, includes diverging views about how political outcomes could affect movements. Many theories argue that political defeats motivate the losing side to increase their mobilization while other established models claim the winning side may feel encouraged and thus increase their mobilization. We examine these diverging perspectives in the context of the extreme right online and recent presidential elections by measuring the effect of the 2008 and 2016 election victories of Obama and Trump on the volume of postings on the largest white supremacy web-forum. ARIMA time series using intervention modeling showed a significant and sizable increase in the total number of posts and right-wing extremist posts but no significant change for firearm posts in either election year. However, the volume of postings for all impact measures was highest for the 2008 election.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 17 May 2020  
Accepted 2 August 2020

## Introduction

This study examines the impact of recent presidential election results in the United States (U.S.) on the extreme right's online activity. Two of the most recent U.S. presidential elections provide an ideal opportunity to consider whether either Barack Obama or Donald Trump's victory mobilized right-wing extremists (RWEs) in similar or different ways.<sup>1</sup> On one hand, some might expect that the election of the first African American president in 2008 would increase extreme right-wing mobilization due to political deprivation. President Obama's election was a major political defeat for those with far-right views (see Parker and Baretto 2013) and indeed those with extreme right-wing views, including gun rights (Mills 2019; Simi and Futrell 2015), and it should have outraged them and spurred them to protest and increase their activities. In 2016, however, the extreme right enjoyed a major political victory with the election of Donald Trump (Anti-Defamation League 2018; Futrell and Simi 2017). Trump's platform – especially on immigration and gun policies – resonated with them and thus might have further encouraged extreme rightists to mobilize in response. These two elections provide an ideal opportunity to explore how political deprivation and political encouragement impact

**CONTACT** Ryan Scrivens ✉ [rscriv@msu.edu](mailto:rscriv@msu.edu) 📍 School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University 432 Baker Hall, 655 Auditorium Road, East Lansing, MI 48824

<sup>1</sup>Following Berger (2018a), we are guided by the view that RWEs – like all extremists – structure their beliefs on the basis that the success and survival of the in-group is inseparable from the negative acts of an out-group and, in turn, they are willing to assume both an offensive and defensive stance in the name of the success and survival of the in-group (Berger 2018a). Right-wing extremism is thus defined as a racially, ethnically, and/or sexually defined nationalism, which is typically framed in terms of white power and/or white identity (i.e., the in-group) that is grounded in xenophobic and exclusionary understandings of the perceived threats posed by some combination of non-whites, Jews, Muslims, immigrants, refugees, members of the LGBTQ community, and feminists (i.e., the out-group(s)) (Conway, Scrivens, and Macnair 2019). Right-wing extremism and similar terms, such as 'extreme right-wing', the 'extreme right', and 'extreme rightists' are used interchangeably throughout the paper.

the mobilization of the extreme right. Specifically, we explore whether the largest RWE forum saw increased activity after the 2008 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections.

Williams (2009) explained that racist paranoia increased dramatically after the election of Obama, and this hate and paranoia spread through online discussion forums. Researchers also uncovered a spike in posting activity on Stormfront, the oldest and most visited white supremacy forum (Hanks and Zhang 2017), as well as hostile discourse in other RWE digital spaces (Sela, Kuflik, and Mesch 2012) in response to Obama's election victory. Additionally, a rise in hate crimes was observed in the U.S. following the election results in 2008 with hundreds of incidents of intimidation and abuse (Bigg 2008). The ascension of Donald Trump as a presidential candidate was similarly linked with an increase in extremist postings as the language used in his campaign resonated with RWEs (Berger 2016). In fact, Stormfront, among other extreme-right wing platforms, experienced a surge in online traffic during the 2016 election season, with users expressing support for Trump's political campaign (Schreckinger 2015). Yet while Trump's presidential campaign and subsequent victory did not cause RWEs to emerge (Inwood 2019), his anti-immigrant campaign encouraged adherents to openly preach and practice racist hate, both on- and offline (Futrell and Simi 2017). Anti-hate watch-groups, for example, documented more than 800 reports of hate crimes in the first few weeks following Trump's election win (Potok 2017). After Trump's election victory, RWE actors discussed their perceived win both on- and offline (Anti-Defamation League 2018; Futrell and Simi 2017).

Many theories argue that political defeats – like the defeat suffered by the extreme right in 2008 as a result of the election victory of Obama – would motivate the losing side to increase their mobilization (e.g., Gurr 1970; Kaplan 1993, 1996; LaFree, Dugan, and Korte 2009). Other well-established models, however, claim that the winning side may feel encouraged and thus increase their mobilization (e.g., Green and Rich 1998; Hewitt 2000; McAdam 1982; Van Dyke, Soule, and Widom 2001). We examine these arguments in the context of the extreme right and recent U.S. presidential elections, the most significant American political prize. As we note above and below, many factions of the RWE movement, as well as those with far-right views (see Parker and Baretto 2013), were strongly opposed to Obama and were terrified about him winning the presidency and the consequences of that (Mills 2019). Again, many of these same segments were enthusiastic supporters of Trump and believed his victory could embolden their world views (Futrell and Simi 2017). How did these two election results impact RWEs' online activities? More broadly, what matters more: (1) political defeat, deprivation, and/or strain, or (2) political victory, and encouragement? Both perspectives have well-established theoretical foundations that we empirically investigate here.

### **Mobilizing extremism: political defeat and deprivation or political victory and encouragement?**

The theoretical literature from criminology, social movements, and political sociology, among others, includes diverging views about how political outcomes could affect movements. One perspective maintains that political defeats could cause a movement to increase its mobilization and activities. Political and relative deprivation – consistent with losing a strongly held political contest – have long been used to explain increased social movement activism, and political rebellion (Gurr 1970). Research on the Tea Party movement (TPM), for example, has shown a link between political defeat and mobilization (Parkin, Freilich, and Chermak 2015), from enhanced voter turnout in subsequent elections (Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin 2011) to increased membership (Tope, Pickett, and Chiricos 2015) and support (Parker and Baretto 2013) for the TPM from people with racial grievances. Jeffrey Kaplan's (1993, 1996) research on the anti-abortion movement has also illustrated how defeats, both legislative and perceived abuse during protests, has radicalized and spurred on pro-life movement activists. King and Sutton (2013), in their assessment of the temporal clustering of hate crime offending, have shown how antecedent events involving a clearly identifiable group associated with the event (e.g., Muslims in the case of 9/11) can lead to perceptions of group threat and various forms of reactionary behavior. The terrorism and criminology literature similarly discuss backlash effects,

where laws or government policies and conceivably an election result “outrage participants or energize a base of potential supporters . . . [and] may increase the likelihood of further terrorist strikes” (LaFree, Dugan, and Korte 2009:21) and it seems could likewise affect legal mobilization (see McCauley 2006; see also Pridemore and Freilich 2007).

Similar logic underlies criminology’s popular general strain theory (GST). Agnew (1992) posits that one major cause of crime is failing to achieve important goals, or losing something that is important to you, which causes stress that results in criminal behavior. Agnew (2010) subsequently extended GST and applied it to terrorism. He contends terrorism is more likely to occur when civilians experience a high level of collective/communal strain that they believe is unfair, and from more powerful entities and others who they are weakly bonded to. The increased frustration and other negative emotions make terrorism more likely (i.e., terrorism is a mechanism to reduce the frustration), as does the decreased self and social controls that make coping more difficult. Here, the extreme right was increasingly aggravated by the idea that the federal government (who they feared and loathed) would further marginalize them by, in their view, unjustly and unlawfully taking away their gun rights and related liberties (Simi and Futrell 2015). Another consistent approach is reactance theory (Brehm and Brehm 1981) that predicts persons will confront statutes, laws, policies, and actions that they view as controlling their actions. Factions of the extreme right, as outlined, not only despised President Obama due to virulent racism, but as noted were also fearful of losing their cherished right to bear arms (Mills 2019). During his campaign, Obama strongly endorsed gun control and mocked some for bitterly clinging to their guns and religion in one widely publicized 2008 primary campaign incident (Pilkington 2008). These deprivation and backlash processes may be magnified when the governing authority is viewed as illegitimate (Sherman 1993; Tyler 2000), which dovetails with another extreme right-wing belief of suspicion and hostility to the federal government especially, as noted, in the areas of guns and other individual liberties (see Freilich et al. 2014; see also Freilich et al. 2018).

On the other hand, some social movement scholars conclude that a movement’s mobilization, activism, and even violence will increase, not due to political defeat, but to political victories. Green and Rich (1998), for example, investigated the association between white supremacist rallies and demonstrations (i.e., legal activities) and cross-burnings on the county-level in North Carolina. They found that in counties where white supremacist rallies occurred, the likelihood of a cross burning increased. The authors offer one interpretation for this finding: since most of the suspected cross-burners had no apparent ties to white supremacist groups, it could be that white supremacist rallies encouraged fellow travelers – by drawing attention to racial grievances – to engage in this form of racial intimidation. Van Dyke, Soule, and Widom (2001) similarly found that states with sodomy laws had more anti-gay hate crimes. The authors wondered whether the pro-traditional family and anti-gay movement’s political victories indicated a greater tolerance for extreme right-wing activity.

A winning political environment thus encourages the wider social movement and its supporters to act and increase their mobilization. Hewitt (2003:25) claims that “these arguments imply that there will be more violence under sympathetic than hostile administrations”, and it does not seem like too much of an extension to conclude that legal activism could similarly increase. In other words, political victories act as a push for increased activity because the movement may believe it has the support and sympathy of the larger community (Hewitt 2000, 2003). Indeed, political process theory – which is one of the leading social movement models – argues that successful movements take advantage of favorable political and other environments to increase their mobilization and activities (McAdam 1982).

## Study hypotheses

Research has overwhelmingly found that central offline events influence online activity and highlight an important interaction between people’s on- and offline worlds (e.g., Conway-Silva et al. 2017; Grinberg et al. 2019; Shmargad and Sanchez 2020; Tumasjan et al. 2010). Less, however, is known about the connection between these two environments and the practices of extreme right-wing

communities in particular, and extremist communities in general (Scrivens, Gill, and Conway 2020). Instead, empirical studies have tended to focus on how critical events influence the life trajectories and activities of the extreme right in the offline world (e.g., Blee 1996; Bubolz and Simi 2015; Freilich, Chermak, and Caspi 2009a; Freilich, Chermak, and Simone 2009b; Schafer, Mullin, and Box 2014; Simi and Futrell 2009, 2015). Additionally, research has explored the association between the text and messaging of terrorist groups and offline actions (e.g., Hermann and Sakiev 2011; Pennebaker 2011; Smith 2008; Smith et al. 2008), as well as the link between U.S. presidential rhetoric and political violence (e.g., Fisher, Dugan, and Chenoweth 2018).

Some recent research has also considered the impact of trigger or galvanizing events on hateful content online such as the effect of riots (Bliuc et al. 2019), rallies (van der Vegt et al. 2019), and terrorist attacks (Burnap et al. 2014; Kaakinen, Oksanen, and Räsänen 2018; Williams and Burnap 2015). The role of political elections as trigger events has also become an area of research in part because of the rising popularity in far-right politics and ideologies in the Western world. The primary focus of this scholarship has been on the relationship between tweets about the 2016 U.S. presidential election and hate speech on Twitter (Müller and Schwarz 2018; Siegel et al. 2018) as well as the growth of alt-right networks on Twitter (e.g., Berger 2018b; Ganesh 2020; Sainudiin et al. 2019) and 4chan (Papasavva et al. 2020; Zannettou et al. 2018a, 2018b) in response to Trump's election victory. But in light of these important contributions, less is known about the extent to which divergent presidential election results trigger or mobilize the extreme right online.

This study sought to assess the role of presidential election results as triggering events affecting the posting activities of participants within an extreme right online community, as research has shown a connection between social-political events and spikes in racially-motivated actions, both online (e.g., Sela, Kuflik, and Mesch 2012; Zannettou et al. 2018b) and offline (see Edwards and Rushin 2018). Again, our emphasis here is on whether political defeat and deprivation or political victory and encouragement (i.e., the 2008 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections of Obama and Trump, respectively) impacts users' posting activities on the largest RWE forum. On the one hand, many theories argue that political defeats motivate the losing side to increase their mobilization (e.g., Gurr 1970; Kaplan 1993, 1996; LaFree, Dugan, and Korte 2009). Research in this regard has found that online activity in general and hateful activity in particular increased in digital platforms of the extreme right following Obama's election victory in 2008 as a result of a perceived political defeat (e.g., Hanks and Zhang 2017; Sela, Kuflik, and Mesch 2012). Research also suggests that it is common for RWEs to express the need to be prepared to mobilize during times of social-political uncertainty, oftentimes by participating in paramilitary preparations and stockpiling firearms, among other necessities (e.g., Blee 2002; Chermak 2002; Freilich, Chermak, and Simone 2009b; Kaplan 1995). Here discussions about the right to bear arms, for example, are commonly found in online communities of the extreme right (Kimmel and Ferber 2000), including following the election of the first African American president who was perceived by the extreme right as supporting gun control (Mills 2019). Thus, this research leads to the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Posting activity will increase over time in the largest online forum of the extreme right following the 2008 U.S. presidential election results.

**Hypothesis 2:** RWE-related posting activity will increase over time in the largest online forum of the extreme right following the 2008 U.S. presidential election results.

**Hypothesis 3:** Firearms-related posting activity will increase over time in the largest online forum of the extreme right following the 2008 U.S. presidential election results.

On the other hand, well-established models claim the winning side may feel encouraged and thus increase their mobilization (e.g., Green and Rich 1998; Hewitt 2000; McAdam 1982; Van Dyke, Soule, and Widom 2001). Such perspectives are supported by previous research findings in that, within

extreme right-wing digital spaces and in online discussions, online activity and hateful activity increased following Trump's election victory in 2016 as a result of a perceived political victory (e.g., Papasavva et al. 2020; Zannettou et al. 2018a, 2018b). Reports also suggest that Trump, who during his election campaign was concerned about protecting the rights of gun owners, was supported by the extreme right in part because of his stance on gun rights (Neiwert 2017). Indeed, the right to bear arms is rooted in extreme right-wing ideologies (Barkun 1989; Blee 2002; Chermak 2002; Freilich, Pichardo Almanzar, and Rivera 1999). Thus, this research leads to the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 4:** Posting activity will increase over time in the largest online forum of the extreme right following the 2016 U.S. presidential election results.

**Hypothesis 5:** RWE-related posting activity will increase over time in the largest online forum of the extreme right following the 2016 U.S. presidential election results.

**Hypothesis 6:** Firearms-related posting activity will increase over time in the largest online forum of the extreme right following the 2016 U.S. presidential election results.

While the two competing perspectives noted above have well-established theoretical foundations in the terrorism and criminology literature, what remains unknown is which may be more influential in mobilizing the extreme right online: (1) political defeat, deprivation, and/or strain, or (2) political victory, and encouragement?

Gauging online discussions following key social-political events in general can provide researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, among others, with useful information about how digital hate campaigns or efforts to mobilize in extreme online spaces develop over time as a result of the offline events. Exploring how members of a particular extremist movement, including the extreme right, communicates and by extension mobilizes online following political defeat and/or victory can also be helpful in understanding or perhaps even predicting alarming trends in online activity before happening offline. Law enforcement and intelligence communities, for example, may be in a better position to identify online discussions or user networks that are credible threat (i.e., those who engage in violence offline), thus informing future risk factor frameworks. Officials may also have valuable intelligence, informed by online trends, to put them on higher alert following the political defeat or victory of an extremist movement. Time series analysis using intervention modeling provides a useful approach through which to guide these efforts.

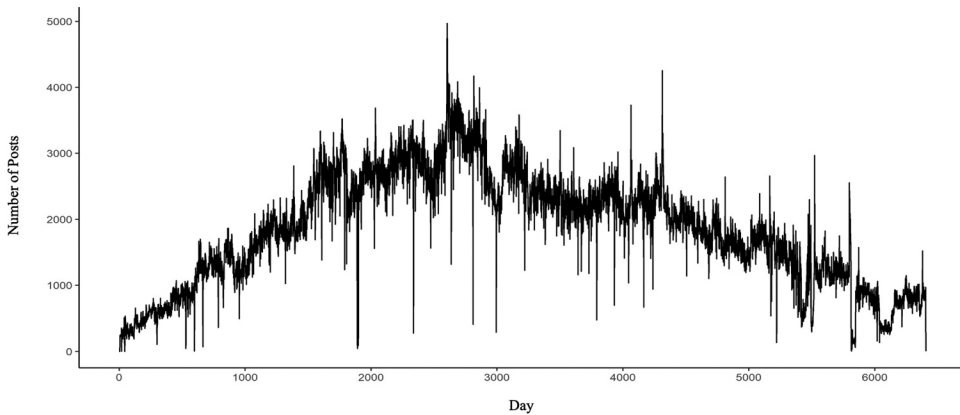
## Data and method

We used posts from Stormfront.org, which is the oldest racial hate site and discussion forum used by members of the RWE movement. Stormfront is also one of the most influential RWE forums in the world (Bliuc et al. 2019; Simi and Futrell 2015). Although a number of emerging digital spaces have been adopted by the extreme right in recent years (see Conway, Scrivens, and Macnair 2019), Stormfront continues to be a valuable online space for researchers to assess temporal posting patterns (Bliuc et al. 2019; Kleinberg, van der Vegt, and Gill 2020; Scrivens, Davies, and Frank 2018).

Stormfront has been decreasing in user posting activity in recent years (see Figure 1), but it remains the largest and one of the most active RWE forums in the world. It has also hosted some of the deadliest adherents since its inception. Anti-hate watch-groups, for example, have described Stormfront as “a magnet and breeding ground for the deadly and the deranged”, claiming that its members have been responsible for approximately 100 murders since the site came online (Southern Poverty Law Center 2014). Stormfront has also been referred to as an “echo chamber for hate” (Simi and Futrell 2015) and a “hornet's nest” for extremists to become more extreme (Wojcieszak 2010).

All open source content on Stormfront, which included 11,431,649 posts made by 102,087 authors between August 28, 2001 and October 29, 2017, was captured using a custom-written computer





**Figure 1.** Distribution of postings on Stormfront from 2001 to 2017.

program that was designed to collect vast amounts of information online (for more information on the web-crawler, see Scrivens et al. 2019). We then analyzed all open source messages that were posted on the forum 120 days before and 120 days after each election event, which consisted of 765,573 posts for the 2008 election and 256,867 posts for the 2016 election.

### **Impact measures**

*Total posts*, which is a calculation of the total number of postings on Stormfront per day, was constructed for the purpose of measuring the general frequency of postings around the time of the presidential elections. In short, this measure served as a baseline with which we could compare the total number of postings with the total number of RWE posts and firearm posts.

*RWE posts*, which is a calculation of the total number of postings on Stormfront per day that included hate keywords related to right-wing extremism, was constructed for the purpose of identifying discussions that underpin extreme right-wing sentiment around the time of the presidential elections and minimize the collection of extraneous posts. Here a list of keywords was developed by drawing from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Hate Symbol Database, which included popular hate terminology and slogans (e.g., HH [heil Hitler], WPWW [white pride worldwide], ACAB [all cops are bastards], etc.), as well as hate symbols (e.g., a swastika, confederate flag, Celtic cross, etc.), and names of popular RWE groups (e.g., Blood & Honour, Hammerskins, Aryan Nations, etc.) frequently used by the extreme right in Stormfront (Bowman-Grieve 2009; Daniels 2009), among other RWE spaces online (see Daniels 2009).<sup>2</sup> To illustrate, research suggests that hate symbols and terms are commonly used by adherents in RWE spaces online to communicate with the like-minded as well as express a level of commitment to “the cause” (e.g., Bowman-Grieve 2009; Daniels 2009; De Koster and Houtman 2008; Holt, Freilich, and Chermak 2020). Research also suggests that users express their extreme right-wing identity by referring to their RWE affiliate groups during their online communications (e.g., Simi and Futrell 2015).

*Firearm posts*, which is a calculation of the total number of postings on Stormfront per day that included keywords related to firearms, was constructed for the purposes of evaluating whether, during the time of the two elections, the online content on Stormfront included discussions about firearms.<sup>3</sup> A list of keywords for this measure was developed by drawing from an extensive list of terms that relate to firearms.<sup>4</sup> Previous studies suggest that ingrained within extreme right-wing ideologies is an

<sup>2</sup>The full list of RWE terms that made up this impact measure can be found by visiting the ADL Hate Symbol Database at: <https://www.adl.org/hate-symbols>. Terms for this measure consisted of all 328 keywords found in the Database.

<sup>3</sup>For the RWE and firearm posting measures, each keyword was unique to each list and there were no overlapping words across lists.

<sup>4</sup>The full list of firearm terms that made up this impact measure can be found by visiting: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_firearms\\_terms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_firearms_terms). Terms for this measure consisted of all 202 keywords found in the glossary of firearms terms.

unrestricted right to own firearms in the name of personal liberty and survival (Barkun 1989; Blee 2002; Chermak 2002; Freilich, Chermak, and Simone 2009b; Freilich, Pichardo Almanzar, and Rivera 1999). Extreme right-wing adherents in the U.S., for example, often argue that, had the population not had access to firearms, the American Revolution would not have succeeded. They also believe that firearms are essential to protect their personal liberty from enemy foreign forces and any dictatorial government that may emerge within the governmental system. Together, firearms are the foundation of individual liberty and American sovereignty (Chermak 2002; Freilich, Pichardo Almanzar, and Rivera 1999).

### **Analytic strategy**

To determine whether the two election results had an impact on the volume of posts for the three-forum series (i.e., total posts, RWE posts, and firearm posts) as well as compare the impact across election results, we employ ARIMA time series using intervention modeling (see McCleary, McDowall, and Bartos 2017 for a detailed discussion about intervention modeling). The process begins with pre-whitening the observations that occurred prior to the event. That is, any trend, autoregressive, or moving-average processes are controlled for, so the pre-intervention series becomes white-noise. Each pre-event series was evaluated by the autocorrelation and partial autocorrelation plots for indications of a trend, autoregression, or a moving average. To determine if the series needed differencing, we ran a series of diagnostic tests: the ADF, the DF-GLS, and the KPSS.<sup>5</sup>

The ARIMA iterative evaluation process allows the analyst to detect any signal in the post-intervention series from random noise in the pre-intervention series. An ARIMA analysis requires running a series of models to assess whether the model's time-series parameters (AR and MA) were statistically significant; if not, the number for the parameter values are adjusted (e.g., changing AR = 2 to AR = 1), and the model is rerun until it is identified as a white-noise process based on the Q statistic. Once the pre-intervention series is deemed white noise, the impact of the event can be evaluated by including a dummy variable for the weeks following the intervention (e.g., the weeks following the election of Trump in 2016 = 1 and prior to the election = 0).<sup>6</sup> We ran the ARIMA analysis using the software R's *arimax* function from the Time Series Analysis (TSA) package (Chan and Ripley 2018).

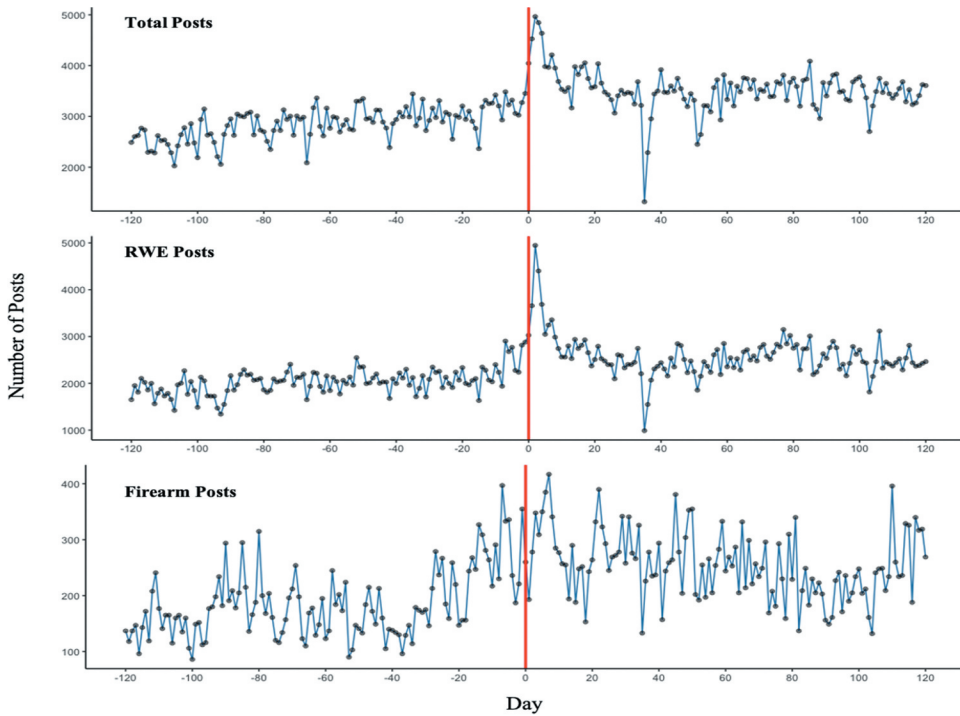
### **Results**

The time series plots for each of the two elections by three posting types are shown in Figures 2 and 3 for the 2008 and 2016 elections, respectively. In Figure 2, the pre-event series (120 days prior to the 2008 election) for total posts (the top panel) appears to be fairly stable in 2008, though slightly increasing as election day approached. The day of the election is shown as the vertical line in the plot. There is a clear elevation in postings around election day in 2008 for all three series. The mean of the post-2008 election series appears elevated, though there is a significant drop in total postings on day 156 as a result of the forum going offline for part of that day. This drop then recovers a few days later. For RWE posts, this series appears to follow the same pattern as the first series, though the upward trend is not as pronounced as the first series. The dip that is apparent on the total posts on day 156 is also evident in the RWE posts. Finally, the firearm postings follow similar trends as the first two series, though the scale of firearm postings is much less than those in series one and two (i.e., a scale of 400

<sup>5</sup>The various tests for a unit root have different limits and can report conflicting results. For example, the ADF (augmented Dickey-Fuller) tends to have low statistical power while the KPSS test tends toward type II errors. When the tests provided conflicting evidence of a unit root, we differenced the series based on whether the number of tests indicated a unit root as well as an examination of the ACF plot. We also ran all models with differencing and without, and the significance and direction of the impact coefficient remained the same, though the effect size was typically diminished.

<sup>6</sup>Because we examined election results on three outcomes per election, we adjusted the significance test alpha to 0.016 using the Bonferroni correction (or 0.05/3).





**Figure 2.** Time series plot of postings on Stormfront during the 2008 U.S. presidential election. *Notes:* The vertical line indicates the election day in 2008. The x-axis is 120 prior- and post-election. The series for Firearm Posts has a Y axis that is much lower than Total Posts or RWE Posts.

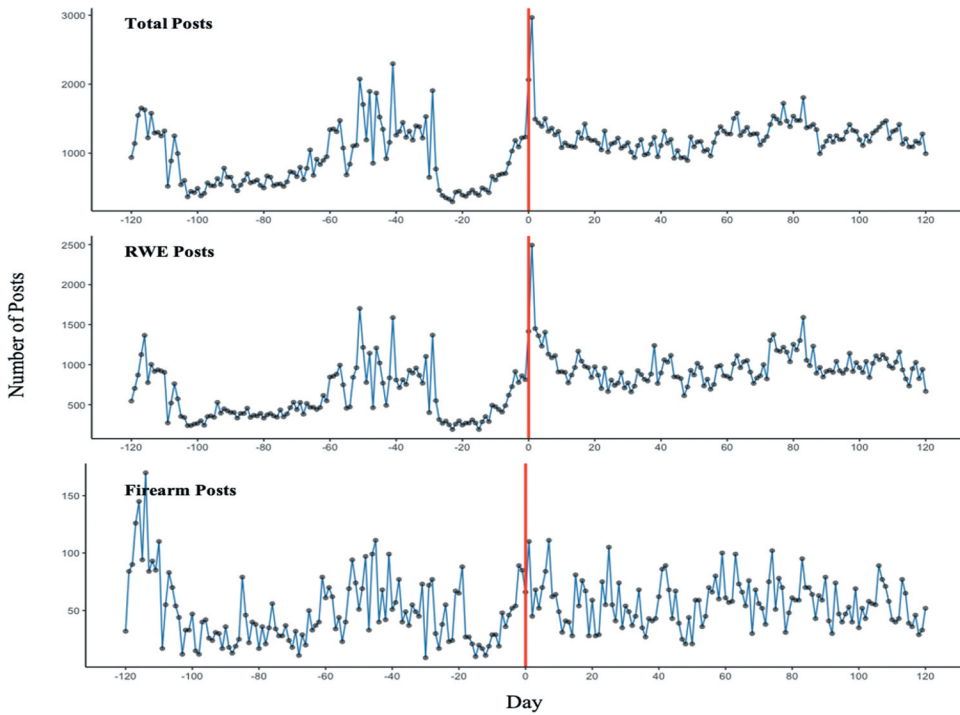
versus 5,000). The drop in the first two series is detectable in the firearms posts, but it does not stand out against the rest of the series.

The plot for postings following the 2016 election is similar to the 2008 election. In all three posting categories in 2016, there is a spike in activity in the first few days of the series, and then the series stabilizes in that the variation in activity becomes low. The variation in postings then increases and abates in 2016, but there is an escalation in posts running up to election day. Furthermore, the total posts and the RWE posts appear to have an elevated level of activity in the post-election series in 2016, which is not evident in the firearm posting series.

An examination of the plots across elections shows some interesting patterns that suggest possible impact in some of the series, especially given that the frequency of postings on Stormfront has continued to desist in recent years (see Figure 1). Regardless, it is difficult to determine the election effect on the postings without controlling for the various time series factors, namely trend, autocorrelation, and moving averages. Thus, we next turn to the ARIMA analysis to determine if there was a change in postings following either election.

The results of the ARIMA analysis for both elections are presented in Table 1. The time series analysis suggested an ARIMA (1,1,1) model for all three types of posts in 2008. For the total posts here, there was a mean difference of approximately 666 postings in the pre-election series compared to the post-election series. The total posts showed a change of approximately 667 postings in the post-election series ( $p < .001$ ). For RWE posts, the average increase in posts was approximately 543 and the difference was significant ( $\omega = 738.95, p < .010$ ). Finally, for firearm posts, there was also an increase of roughly 70 posts between the two series, but the ARIMA model did not show a statistically significant change ( $\omega = 6.19, p > .050$ ).

For the 2016 election, there was a similar pattern in the results for the 2008 election. For all the three types of posts in 2016, the ARIMA analysis indicated an ARIMA (0,1,1) model. Total posts in 2016



**Figure 3.** Time series plot of postings on Stormfront during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. *Notes:* The vertical line indicates the election day in 2016. The x-axis is 120 prior- and post-election. The series for Firearm Posts has a Y axis that is much lower than Total Posts or RWE Posts

**Table 1.** Interrupted time-series analysis of postings on Stormfront during U.S. presidential elections.

Event and series	Pre-event mean	Post-event mean	Mean difference	p	d	q	$\omega$	s.e.
<i>2008 election</i>								
Total posts	2859.17	3524.94	665.78	1	0	1	667.11***	92.92
RWE posts	2039.28	2582.11	542.832	1	1	1	738.95**	227.06
Firearm posts	184.58	254.78	70.19	1	1	1	6.19	33.75
<i>2016 election</i>								
Total posts	888.60	1258.67	370.07	0	1	1	923.71***	206.38
RWE posts	587.55	981.09	393.54	0	1	1	852.13***	167.49
Firearm posts	48.47	56.75	8.29	0	0	3	7.82	5.033

\*\* $p < 0.016$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . RWE is right-wing extremist. Each pre- and post-event series covered 120 days. For the ARIMA parameters,  $p$  is the number of autoregressive terms,  $d$  is the number of differences needed to make a series stationary, and  $q$  is the number of moving average terms. The  $\omega$  parameter is the difference between the pre-event (0) and post-event (1) observations. The s.e. is the standard error of the  $\omega$  parameter.

showed an increase in mean posts by approximately 370. The ARIMA model indicated the difference between the two series was roughly 924 ( $p < .001$ ). For RWE posts, the mean difference between pre- and post-election was 934; the ARIMA model showed a significant increase ( $\omega = 852.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Firearm postings in the 2016 election series showed a small increase but only by about eight posts and this was not significant ( $p > .050$ ).

In sum, there was an increase in postings following two presidential elections, one for Obama and the other for Trump. The pattern was similar in that total posts and RWE posts were significant and showed a sizable increase. For firearm posts, there was no significant change in either election year. Comparing across the two elections, however, the number of posts for all three types was higher in 2008 than in 2016. For example, there were 1,266 more total posts following the 2008 election of

President Obama than for President Trump. There were also about 1,601 more RWE posts following Obama than Trump.

## Discussion

This study examined the U.S. presidential election results in 2008 and 2016 on the online activity of the extreme right for the purpose of exploring how political defeat and political victory impact the mobilization of the extreme right online. All open-source data found on the largest white supremacy discussion forum, Stormfront, was extracted using a customized web-crawler which included approximately 12 million messages spanning approximately 16 years. ARIMA time series was then employed using intervention modeling for three impact measures (i.e., total posts, RWE posts, and firearm posts) for each election year. Several conclusions can be drawn from this study.

First, and surprisingly, we found no significant change for firearm posts on Stormfront following either presidential election. Perhaps the forum is not a hotbed for discussions about firearms generally, which to some extent is surprising given that previous research suggests that ingrained within extreme right-wing ideologies is an unrestricted right to own firearms for personal liberty and survival purposes (e.g., Blee 2002; Chermak 2002; Freilich, Pichardo Almanzar, and Rivera 1999) as well as the need to be prepared for attacks, oftentimes through paramilitary preparations, training, and stockpiling supplies including firearms – especially during times of economic and social uncertainty (Kaplan 1995; Kimmel and Ferber 2000; Mills 2019). This finding does, however, align with Holt, Freilich, and Chermak (2020) who conducted a content analysis of thousands of posts from eight RWE forums and similarly found few firearm-specific posts and a small portion of posts related to anti-gun control sentiments. On the other hand, the extreme right is a diffused movement encompassing virulent racists and those with less racist tendencies who are most fearful of the federal government (Simi and Futrell 2015). It is possible the virulent far-right racists gravitate to Stormfront, while perhaps those most concerned about firearms are attracted to more specific gun focused sites. Regardless, this finding requires further exploration.

Second, the results of the current study reveal similar posting patterns on Stormfront following the two presidential elections, with a significant and sizable increase in the total posts and RWE posts following each intervention event. This suggests that there is a link between the general political climate, the current administration and posting activity of the extreme right on Stormfront. While this finding aligns with empirical studies that have measured the impact of key social events on hateful sentiment and activity of the extreme right online, whether it is the impact of trigger events (e.g., Bliuc et al. 2019; Burnap et al. 2014; Kaakinen, Oksanen, and Pekka 2018; Williams and Burnap 2015) or U.S. presidential elections (e.g., Müller and Schwarz 2018; Papasavva et al. 2020; Siegel et al. 2018; Zannettou et al. 2018a, 2018b), this is a noteworthy finding because, despite the fact that posting activity on Stormfront has been decreasing for quite some time (see Hanks and Zhang 2017), forum users in our study were responsive to two opposite events that produced similar results. On the one hand, when presidential candidates (e.g., Trump) make political claims that are in support of the views of the online users, they may collectively believe that their viewpoints are not at the fringes and may feel empowered. On the other hand, when candidates (e.g., Obama) make political claims divergent from the views of online users, they may feel marginalized and express the need to mobilize against the perceived threat. But regardless of each event, in response to each election, Stormfront users melded together for the purpose of collective action.

Most notably, though, is that the number of postings for all three impact measures is much higher for the 2008 election than the 2016 election, and the postings are noticeably elevated during the Obama election year compared to those during the Trump election year. In other words, the extreme right appears to be emboldened by Trump in the run up to the 2016 election and their persistence after his election victory supports that assessment, but the online community is much more active both before and after the Obama administration took the Oval Office. Empirical studies have similarly found that Obama's election victory in 2008 amplified racial threat effects among

white Americans (e.g., Wetts and Willer 2018) as well as resulted in an increase in the advocacy of hostility and violence on several hate blogs (e.g., Sela, Kuflik, and Mesch 2012). Researchers have likewise noted that the fear of political and cultural change on part of the Obama administration served as a “tipping point” for the extreme racist right-wing movement specifically (Simi 2010) or far-right movements more broadly, including the TPM (Parker and Baretto 2013). Our analysis of both election results lends empirical support for this claim: during times of political defeat and, by extension, uncertainty that threatens the existence of the white race, online discussions from the extreme right are driven by perceived harms in the offline world (i.e., Obama as president) much more so than external events working in their favor (i.e., Trump as president). Together, political defeat and deprivation seem to have a bigger impact on the mobilization of the extreme right online than political victory and encouragement.

A number of limitations from the current study may inform future research on the impacts of key social events on the online activity of the extreme right. First, there are various ways that researchers can assess impact within an online space of the extreme right. While we would suggest that a key starting place for this is by measuring the total number of posts and incorporating parameters that we used to identify RWE and firearm postings, future research should develop lists of keywords to account for discussions about other key social issues such as immigration, as well as code for various forms of hate speech including the use of humor, and develop a violence metric in an effort to identify topic-specific content. This could be done in combination with a mixed-methods approach to identify key themes that emerge in the data around the time of the intervention events.

Second, the measure that we used to assess whether the 2008 and 2016 elections caused a significant increase in RWE posts was developed by relying on a list of terms from the ADL Hate Symbol Database, but this list does not account for all extreme right-wing postings on Stormfront. Certainly there are other sets of keywords that could be used to identify extreme right-wing postings on the forum in particular, or other online spaces that facilitate extreme right-wing discourse more broadly. Although the majority of the content posted on Stormfront is extremist-related or includes extremist undertones, future research is still needed to develop a measure – or a set of measures – to minimize the collection of extraneous posts and to identify extreme right-wing postings that were not identified in the current study. Researchers could develop more extensive lists of RWE keywords or more precise, topic-based lists, depending on the goal of the identification exercise.

Third, it may be the case that, in addition to Obama’s election victory serving as a “tipping point” for the extreme right (see Simi 2010), the major economic downturn in 2008, for example, amplified their online discourse – which is similar to research on whites’ racial resentment during the year of Obama’s successful presidential candidacy (see Wetts and Willer 2018). Future research should attempt to account for other central events and subsequent interaction effects during the analysis stage. Efforts should also be made to assess whether the post-election increases observed in 2008 and 2016 are unique to those elections, and that increased posting activity does not occur in other less contentious elections. In other words, it is worth exploring whether posting activity on Stormfront increases following presidential elections in general.

Lastly, the results of the current study suggest that both elections caused a significant increase in the total posts and RWE posts for each election, and more so for the Obama victory than the Trump victory, with no significant change for firearm postings in either election year. This begs the question of whether these escalations are restricted to the online space or whether it is also mirrored in offline behavior. Future research should attempt to assess this important on- and offline dynamic by addressing the question of intention relative to action, perhaps by comparing the list of users who were active during either election year with existing data on those who have engaged in both legal movement activity (e.g., rallies, leafletting) and violence offline. Comparing these authors’ online presence may provide the much-needed insight into online activities that may emerge in the offline world and aid law enforcement and others charged with maintaining public safety.

## Statement

This paper has not been published elsewhere and it has not been submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere.

## Notes on contributors

**Ryan Scrivens** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. He is also a Research Fellow at the VOX-Pol Network of Excellence and a Research Associate at the International CyberCrime Research Centre at Simon Fraser University. He conducts problem-oriented interdisciplinary research, with a focus on terrorists' and extremists' use of the Internet, right-wing terrorism and extremism, combating violent extremism, hate crime, and computational social science. His research has been funded by Public Safety Canada, the Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society, and VOX-Pol.

**George W. Burruss** is an Associate Professor in and Associate Department Chair of the Department of Criminology at the University of South Florida. He is also affiliated with Cyber Florida, the Center for Cybersecurity at the University of South Florida. He also serves as editor-in-chief for the *Journal of Crime & Justice*. His main research interests focus on criminal justice organizations and cybercrime. He received his doctorate in criminology and criminal justice from the University of Missouri St. Louis.

**Thomas J. Holt** is a Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University whose research focuses on cybercrime and technology-related deviance. His work has been published in a range of journals, including *Crime & Delinquency*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, and *Terrorism & Political Violence*. He is also a fellow in the cybercrime cluster at the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR).

**Steven M. Chermak** is Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at the Michigan State University, and an investigator for the National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education (NCITE) Center and the Center for Accelerating Operational Efficiency (CAOE). He is also Creator and co-Director of the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), School Shooting Database (SSDB), and the Cybercrime Database (CCDB). Recent publications have appeared in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Crime and Delinquency*, and the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*.

**Joshua D. Freilich** is a member of the Criminal Justice Department at John Jay College, and a Creator and co-Director of the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), the U.S School Shooting Database and the Cyber-ECDB. He is a member of two DHS Centers of Excellence, the National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education (NCITE) Center and the Center for Accelerating Operational Efficiency (CAOE). Freilich's research has been funded by DHS and NIJ and has recently appeared in *Criminology & Public Policy*, the *Annual Review of Criminology*, *Terrorism & Political Violence*, and *Justice Quarterly*.

**Richard Frank** is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Director of the International CyberCrime Research Centre (ICCRC). He is also Associate Editor-in-Chief of *Security Informatics*. Dr. Frank completed a PhD in Computing Science (2010) and another PhD in Criminology (2013) at SFU. His main research interest is Cybercrime. Specifically, he's interested in hackers and security issues, such as online terrorism and warfare.

## ORCID

Ryan Scrivens  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7432-7370>

## References

- Agnew, Robert. 1992. "Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Delinquency." *Criminology* 30 (1):47–87. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.1992.tb01093.x.
- Agnew, Robert. 2010. "A General Strain Theory of Terrorism." *Theoretical Criminology* 14 (2):131–53. doi:10.1177/1362480609350163.
- Anti-Defamation League. 2018. *New Hate and Old: The Changing Face of American White Supremacy*. New York, NY: Anti-Defamation League.
- Barkun, Michael. 1989. "Millenarian Aspects of 'White Supremacist' Movements." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 1 (4):409–34. doi:10.1080/09546558908427037.
- Berger, J. M. 2016. "How White Nationalists Learned to Love Donald Trump." *Politico*, October 25. Retrieved May 12, 2020 (<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/10/donald-trump-2016-white-nationalists-alt-right-214388>).
- Berger, J. M. 2018a. *Extremism*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.



- Berger, J. M. 2018b. *The Alt-Right Twitter Census: Defining and Describing the Audience for Alt-Right Content on Twitter*. Dublin, Ireland: VOX-Pol Network of Excellence.
- Bigg, Matthew. 2008. "Election of Obama Provokes Rise in U.S. Hate Crimes." *Reuters*, November 24. Retrieved May 12, 2020 (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-obama-hatecrimes-idUSTRE4AN81U20081124>).
- Blee, Kathleen M. 1996. "Becoming a Racist: Women in Contemporary Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazi Groups." *Gender and Society* 10 (6):680–702. doi:10.1177/089124396010006002.
- Blee, Kathleen M. 2002. *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bliuc, Ana-Maria, John Betts, Matteo Vergani, Muhammad Iqbal, and Kevin Dunn. 2019. "Collective Identity Changes in Far-Right Online Communities: The Role of Offline Intergroup Conflict." *New Media and Society* 21 (8):1770–86. doi:10.1177/1461444819831779.
- Bowman-Grieve, Lorraine. 2009. "Exploring "Stormfront": A Virtual Community of the Radical Right." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32 (11):989–1007. doi:10.1080/10576100903259951.
- Brehm, Sharon S. and Jack W. Brehm. 1981. *Psychological Reactance: A Theory of Freedom and Control*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Bubolz, Bryan F. and Pete Simi. 2015. "Leaving the World of Hate: Life-Course Transitions and Self-Change." *American Behavioral Scientist* 59 (2):1588–608. doi:10.1177/0002764215588814.
- Burnap, Pete, Matthew L. Williams, Luke Sloan, Omer Rana, William Housley, Adam Edwards, Vincent Knight, Rob Procter, and Alex Voss. 2014. "Tweeting the Terror: Modelling the Social Media Reaction to the Woolwich Terrorist Attack." *Social Network Analysis and Mining* 4:1–14. doi:10.1007/s13278-014-0206-4.
- Chan, Kung-Sik and Brian Ripley. 2018. "TSA: Time Series Analysis. R Package Version 1.2." Retrieved May 12, 2020 (<https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=TSA>).
- Chermak, Steven M. 2002. *Searching for a Demon: The Media Construction of the Militia Movement*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
- Conway, Maura, Ryan Scrivens, and Logan Macnair. 2019. "Right-Wing Extremists' Persistent Online Presence: History and Contemporary Trends." *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague* 10:1–24. doi:10.19165/2019.3.12.
- Conway-Silva, Bethany A., Christine R. Filer, Kate Kenski, and Eric Tsetsi. 2017. "Reassessing Twitter's Agenda-Building Power: An Analysis of Intermedia Agenda-Setting Effects during the 2016 Presidential Primary Season." *Social Science Computer Review* 36 (4):469–83. doi:10.1177/0894439317715430.
- Daniels, Jessie. 2009. *Cyber Racism: White Supremacy Online and the New Attack on Civil Rights*. Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- De Koster, Willem and Dick Houtman. 2008. "Stormfront Is Like a Second Home to Me." *Information, Communication and Society* 11 (8):1155–76. doi:10.1080/13691180802266665.
- Edwards, Griffin S. and Stephen Rushin. 2018. "The Effect of President Trump's Election on Hate Crimes." doi:10.2139/ssrn.3102652.
- Fisher, Daren G., Laura Dugan, and Erica Chenoweth. 2018. "Does US Presidential Rhetoric Affect Asymmetric Political Violence?" *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 12 (1):132–50. doi:10.1080/17539153.2018.1494120.
- Freilich, Joshua D., Steven M. Chermak, Roberta Belli, Jeff Gruenewald, and William S. Parkin. 2014. "Introducing the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB)." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26 (2):372–84. doi:10.1080/09546553.2012.713229.
- Freilich, Joshua D., Steven M. Chermak, and David Caspi. 2009a. "Critical Events in the Life Trajectories of Domestic Extremist White Supremacist Groups." *Criminology & Public Policy* 8 (3):497–530. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9133.2009.00572.x.
- Freilich, Joshua D., Steven M. Chermak, Jeff Gruenewald, William S. Parkin, and Brent R. Klein. 2018. "Patterns of Fatal Extreme-Right Crime in the United States." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12 (6):38–51.
- Freilich, Joshua D., Steven M. Chermak, and Joseph Simone Jr. 2009b. "Surveying American State Police Agencies about Terrorism Threats, Terrorism Sources, and Terrorism Definitions." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21 (3):450–75. doi:10.1080/09546550902950324.
- Freilich, Joshua D., Nelson A. Pichardo Almanzar, and Craig J. Rivera. 1999. "How Social Movement Organizations Explicitly and Implicitly Promote Deviant Behavior: The Case of the Militia Movement." *Justice Quarterly* 16 (3):655–83. doi:10.1080/07418829900094301.
- Futrell, Robert and Pete Simi. 2017. "The [Un]Surprising Alt-Right." *Contexts* 16 (20):76–76. doi:10.1177/1536504217714269.
- Ganesh, Bharath. 2020. "Weaponizing White Thymos: Flows of Rage in the Online Audiences of the Alt-Right." *Cultural Studies*:1–33. Ahead of print. doi:10.1080/09502386.2020.1714687.
- Green, Donald P. and Andrew Rich. 1998. "White Supremacist Activity and Crossburnings in North Carolina." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 14 (3):263–82. doi:10.1023/A:1023082329639.



- Grinberg, Nir, Kenneth Joseph, Lisa Friedland, Briony Swire-Thompson, and David Lazer. 2019. "Fake News on Twitter during the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election." *Science* 363 (6425):374–78. doi:10.1126/science.aau2706.
- Gurr, Tedd R. 1970. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hankes, Keegan and Sam Zhang. 2017. "A Waning Storm: Once the World's Most Popular White Nationalist Website, Stormfront Is Running Out of Steam." Retrieved May 12, 2020 (<https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/02/22/waning-storm-once-world-s-most-popular-white-nationalist-website-stormfront-running-out>).
- Hermann, Margaret G. and Azamat Sakiev. 2011. "Leadership, Terrorism, and the Use of Violence." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 4 (2):126–32. doi:10.1080/17467586.2011.627935.
- Hewitt, Christopher. 2000. "The Political Context of Terrorism in America: Ignoring Extremists or Pandering to Them?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 12 (3–4):325–44. doi:10.1080/09546550008427582.
- Hewitt, Christopher. 2003. *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al Qaeda*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Holt, Thomas J., Joshua D. Freilich, and Steven M. Chermak. 2020. "Examining the Online Expression of Ideology among Far-Right Extremist Forum Users." *Terrorism and Political Violence*:1–21. Ahead of print. doi:10.1080/09546553.2019.1701446.
- Inwood, Joshua. 2019. "White Supremacy, White Counter-Revolutionary Politics, and the Rise of Donald Trump." *Politics and Space* 37 (4):579–96. doi:10.1177/2399654418789949.
- Kaakinen, Markus, Atte Oksanen, and Pekka Räsänen. 2018. "Did the Risk of Exposure to Online Hate Increase After the November 2015 Paris Attacks? A Group Relations Approach." *Computers in Human Behavior* 78:90–97. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.09.022.
- Kaplan, Jeffrey. 1993. "America's Last Prophetic Witness: The Literature of the Rescue Movement." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5 (3):58–77. doi:10.1080/09546559308427220.
- Kaplan, Jeffrey. 1995. "Right Wing Violence in North America." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7 (1):44–95. doi:10.1080/09546559508427285.
- Kaplan, Jeffrey. 1996. "Absolute Rescue: Absolutism, Defensive Action and the Resort to Force." Pp. 128–63 in *Millennialism and Violence*, edited by Michael Barkun. London: Frank Cass.
- Kimmel, Michael and Abby L. Ferber. 2000. "White Men Are This Nation:" Right-Wing Militias and the Restoration of Rural American Masculinity." *Rural Sociology* 65 (4):582–604. doi:10.1111/j.1549-0831.2000.tb00045.x.
- King, Ryan D. and Gretchen M. Sutton. 2013. "High Times for Hate Crimes: Explaining the Temporal Clustering of Hate-Motivated Offending." *Criminology* 51 (4):871–94. doi:10.1111/1745-9125.12022.
- Kleinberg, Bennett, Isabelle van der Vegt, and Paul Gill. 2020. "The Temporal Evolution of a Far-Right Forum." *Journal of Computational Social Science*:1–23. Ahead of print. doi:10.1007/s42001-020-00064-x.
- LaFree, Gary, Laura Dugan, and Raven Korte. 2009. "The Impact of British Counter Terrorist Strategies on Political Violence in Northern Ireland: Comparing Deterrence and Backlash Models." *Criminology* 47 (1):501–30. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2009.00138.x.
- McAdam, Doug. 1982. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- McCauley, Clark. 2006. "Jujitsu Politics: Terrorism and Response to Terrorism." Pp. 45–65 in *Collateral Damage: The Psychological Consequences of America's War on Terrorism*, edited by Paul R. Kimmel and Chris E. Stout. Westport, CN: Praeger.
- McCleary, Richard, David McDowall, and Bradley Bartos. 2017. *Design and Analysis of Time Series Experiments*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Mills, Michael F. 2019. "Obamageddon: Fear, the Far Right, and the Rise of "Doomsday" Prepping in Obama's America." *Journal of American Studies*:1–30. Ahead of print. doi:10.1017/S0021875819000501.
- Müller, Karsten and Carlo Schwarz. 2018. "Making America Hate Again? Twitter and Hate Crime Under Trump." *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi:10.2139/ssrn.3149103.
- Neiwert, David. 2017. *Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump*. London, UK: Verso.
- Papasavva, Antonis, Savvas Zannettou, Emiliano De Cristofaro, Gianluca Stringhini, and Jeremy Blackburn. 2020. "Raiders of the Lost Kek: 3.5 Years of Augmented 4chan Posts from the Politically Incorrect Board." *arXiv:2001.07487*.
- Parker, Christopher S. and Matt A. Baretto. 2013. *Change They Can't Believe: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Parkin, William S., Joshua D. Freilich, and Steven M. Chermak. 2015. "Tea Party Mobilization and Power Devaluation." *Sociological Spectrum* 35 (4):329–48. doi:10.1080/02732173.2015.1043680.
- Pennebaker, James W. 2011. "Using Computer Analyses to Identify Language Style and Aggressive Intent: The Secret Life of Function Words." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 4 (2):92–102. doi:10.1080/17467586.2011.627932.
- Pilkington, Ed. 2008. "Obama Angers Midwest Voters with Guns and Religion Remark." *The Guardian*, April 14. Retrieved May 12, 2020 (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/14/barackobama.uselections2008>).
- Potok, Mark. 2017. "The Trump Effect." Retrieved May 12, 2020 (<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/trump-effect>).

- Pridemore, William A. and Joshua D. Freilich. 2007. "The Impact of State Laws Protecting Abortion Clinics and Reproductive Rights on Crimes against Abortion Providers: Deterrence, Backlash, or Neither?" *Law and Human Behavior* 31 (6):611–27. doi:10.1007/s10979-006-9078-0.
- Sainudiin, Raazesh, Kumar Yogeeswaran, Kyle Nash, and Rania Sahioun. 2019. "Characterizing the Twitter Network of Prominent Politicians and SPLC-Defined Hate Groups in the 2016 US Presidential Election." *Social Network Analysis and Mining* 9 (34):1–15. doi:10.1007/s13278-019-0567-9.
- Schafer, Joseph A., Christopher W. Mullin, and Stephanie Box. 2014. "Awakening: The Emergence of White Supremacist Ideologies." *Deviant Behavior* 35 (3):173–96. doi:10.1080/01639625.2013.834755.
- Schreking, Ben. 2015. "White Supremacist Groups See Trump Bump." *Politico*, December 10. Retrieved May 12, 2020 (<https://www.politico.com/story/2015/12/donald-trump-white-supremacists-216620>).
- Scrivens, Ryan, Garth Davies, and Richard Frank. 2018. "Measuring the Evolution of Radical Right-Wing Posting Behaviors Online." *Deviant Behavior* 41 (2):216–32. doi:10.1080/01639625.2018.1556994.
- Scrivens, Ryan, Tiana Gaudette, Garth Davies, and Richard Frank. 2019. "Searching for Extremist Content Online Using The Dark Crawler and Sentiment Analysis." Pp. 179–94 in *Methods of Criminology and Criminal Justice Research*, edited by Mathieu Deflem and Derek M.D. Silva. Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing.
- Scrivens, Ryan, Paul Gill, and Maura Conway. 2020. "The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism and Terrorism: Suggestions for Progressing Research." Pp. 1–20 in *The Palgrave Handbook of International Cybercrime and Cyberdeviance*, edited by Thomas J. Holt and Adam M. Bossler. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave.
- Sela, Shlomi, Tsvi Kuflik, and Gustavo S. Mesch. 2012. "Changes in the Discourse of Online Hate Blogs: The Effect of Barack Obama's Election in 2008." *First Monday* 17(11). doi:10.5210/fm.v17i11.4154.
- Sherman, Lawrence W. 1993. "Defiance, Deterrence, and Irrelevance: A Theory of Criminal Sanction." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 30 (4):445–73. doi:10.1177/0022427893030004006.
- Shmargad, Yotam and Lisa Sanchez. 2020. "Social Media Influence and Electoral Competition." *Social Science Computer Review*:1–20. Ahead of print. doi:10.1177/0894439320906803.
- Siegel, Alexandra A., Evgenii Nikitin, Pablo Barberá, Joanna Sterling, Bethany Pullen, Richard Bonneau, Jonathan Nagler, and Joshua A. Tucker. 2018. "Measuring the Prevalence of Online Hate Speech, with an Application to the 2016 US Election." Retrieved May 12, 2020 ([https://smappnyu.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Hate\\_Speech\\_2016\\_US\\_Election\\_Text.pdf](https://smappnyu.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Hate_Speech_2016_US_Election_Text.pdf)).
- Simi, Pete. 2010. "Why Study White Supremacist Terror? A Research Note." *Deviant Behavior* 31 (3):251–73. doi:10.1080/01639620903004572.
- Simi, Pete and Robert Futrell. 2009. "Negotiating White Power Activist Stigma." *Social Problems* 56 (1):89–110. doi:10.1525/sp.2009.56.1.89.
- Simi, Pete and Robert Futrell. 2015. *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Smith, Allison G. 2008. "The Implicit Motives of Terrorist Groups: How the Needs for Affiliation and Power Translate into Death and Destruction." *Political Psychology* 29 (1):55–75. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2007.00612.x.
- Smith, Allison G., Peter Suedfeld, Lucian G. Conway III, and David G. Winter. 2008. "The Language of Violence: Distinguishing Terrorist from Nonterrorist Groups by Thematic Content Analysis." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 1 (2):142–63. doi:10.1080/17467580802590449.
- Southern Poverty Law Center. 2014. "White Homicide Worldwide." Retrieved May 12, 2020 (<https://www.splcenter.org/20140401/white-homicide-worldwide>).
- Tope, Daniel, Justin T. Pickett, and Ted Chiricos. 2015. "Anti-Minority Attitudes and Tea Party Movement Membership." *Social Science Research* 51:322–37. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2014.09.006.
- Tumasjan, Andranik, Timm O. Sprenger, Philipp G. Sandner, and Isabell M. Welp. 2010. "Election Forecasts with Twitter: How 140 Characters Reflect the Political Landscape." *Social Science Computer Review* 29 (4):402–18. doi:10.1177/0894439310386557.
- Tyler, Tom R. 2000. "Multiculturalism and the Willingness of Citizens to Defer Law and Legal Authorities." *Law and Social Inquiry* 25 (4):983–1019. doi:10.1111/j.1747-4469.2000.tb00314.x.
- van der Vegt, Isabelle, Maximilian Mozes, Paul Gill, and Bennett Kleinberg. 2019. "Online Influence, Offline Violence: Linguistic Responses to the 'Unite the Right' Rally." *arXiv:1908.11599 [Cs]*.
- Van Dyke, Nella, Sarah A. Soule, and Rebecca Widom. 2001. "The Politics of Hate: Explaining Variation in the Incidence of Anti-Gay Hate Crime." *Research in Political Sociology* 9:35–58. doi:10.1016/S0895-9935(01)80007-3.
- Wetts, Rachel and Rob Willer. 2018. "Privilege on the Precipice: Perceived Racial Status Threats Lead White Americans to Oppose Welfare Programs." *Social Forces* 97 (2):793–822. doi:10.1093/sf/soy046.
- Williams, Joseph. 2009. "Obama Election Spurs Wave of Hate Group Violence: Study Cites Anger of White Supremacists." *Boston Globe*, May 11. Retrieved May 12, 2020 ([http://archive.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2009/05/11/obama\\_election\\_spurs\\_wave\\_of\\_hate\\_group\\_violence](http://archive.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2009/05/11/obama_election_spurs_wave_of_hate_group_violence)).
- Williams, Matthew L. and Pete Burnap. 2015. "Cyberhate on Social Media in the Aftermath of Woolwich: A Case Study in Computational Criminology and Big Data." *British Journal of Criminology* 56 (2):211–38. doi:10.1093/bjc/azv059.

- Williamson, Vanessa, Theda Skocpol, and John Coggin. 2011. "The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism." *Perspectives on Politics* 9 (1):25–43. doi:[10.1017/S153759271000407X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759271000407X).
- Wojcieszak, Magdalena. 2010. "Don't Talk to Me': Effects of Ideological Homogenous Online Groups and Politically Dissimilar Offline Ties on Extremism." *New Media and Society* 12 (4):637–55. doi:[10.1177/1461444809342775](https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809342775).
- Zannettou, Savvas, Barry Bradlyn, Emiliano De Cristofaro, Haewoon Kwak, Michael Sirivianos, Gianluca Stringhini, and Jeremy Blackburn. 2018b. "What is Gab: A Bastion of Free Speech or an Alt-Right Echo Chamber." Proceedings of the WWW '18: Companion Proceedings of The Web Conference 2018, Lyon, France.
- Zannettou, Savvas, Joel Finkelstein, Barry Bradlyn, and Jeremy Blackburn. 2018a. "A Quantitative Approach to Understanding Online Antisemitism." *arXiv:1809.01644*.